

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER APOLOGIZES TO SIKHS FOR GENOCIDE OF 1984—INDIAN MUST FREE KHALISTAN AND ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, apologized to the Sikhs for the massacres of Sikhs that took place in November 1984. Over 20,000 Sikhs died in that massacre just in Delhi. Meanwhile, Sikh police officers were locked in their barracks and the state television and radio were encouraging more Sikh bloodshed.

This is a sad chapter in the history of India and it is appropriate that the Government has finally admitted its own culpability and apologized for this atrocity. These kinds of admissions are always welcome. But Prime Minister Singh's apology is 21 years too late and it is only a baby step in the direction of justice. And an apology for the military attack on the Golden Temple in June of that year is still not forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, there are families of those who died in this massacre who have still never been compensated in any way. We know that no compensation can bring back their loved ones, but at least it can help make their lives better. India must compensate the victims' families if this apology is serious. It must also bring to justice the officials responsible for the massacre. These are necessary steps for the apology to be taken as anything more than mere empty words.

But there is something else that India must do as well. It must make proper restitution to the whole Sikh Nation for this massacre and its many other atrocities against the Sikhs.

How do you pay such a huge debt, Mr. Speaker? How do you pay back an entire nation for atrocities against it? On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared its independence, declaring the new country of Khalistan. Since then, India has continued to occupy Khalistan. Over half a million Indian troops still carry out this brutal occupation to this day. These troops must be withdrawn and India must recognize the sovereignty of a free and independent Khalistan. That is how it can compensate the Sikh Nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Indian Government maintains that there is no support for Khalistan among the Sikhs in Punjab, despite large marches that have occurred as recently as June demanding Khalistan. In June, 35 Sikhs were charged with a crime. Their offense? They made some speeches and raised the Khalistani flag. To quote my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, "Is asking for freedom a crime in a democracy?"

So if India is democratic and there is no support for Khalistan, then why is the Indian Government afraid to have a vote on the matter? Why not simply have a vote and prove it? It is time for the United States to hold India's feet to the fire on its proclaimed democratic principles. We must stop our aid to India until it respects human rights and ceases activities such as the Delhi massacre, the arrests of activists for raising a flag, and the like. And we

must demand self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and all the suppressed, captive nations of South Asia. In a democracy you cannot rule against the will of the people, and the essence of democracy is the right to self-determination. It is time to press India, the self-proclaimed "world's largest democracy," to do the right thing and let the people have their freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert the Council of Khalistan's press release on Prime Minister Singh's apology into the RECORD at this time. Thank you.

WASHINGTON, DC, Sept. 14, 2005.—Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has formally apologized to the Sikh Nation for the genocide against the Sikhs in November 1984 in which over 20,000 Sikhs were killed in Delhi alone while Sikh police were locked in their barracks and Indian radio and television called for more Sikh blood.

"We appreciate the Prime Minister's apology," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "It is more than any other Indian leader has done, but it is too little, too late—21 years too late, in fact." The Council of Khalistan leads the struggle to liberate the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. "We need to see if this apology is sincere or just another propaganda ploy by the Indian government." However, he noted that the Indian government's military attack on the Golden Temple, the center and seat of Sikhism, in June 1984 was more important to the Sikh Nation. "Where is the apology for that?" he asked.

"India must pay full and appropriate restitution to the families and bring the officials responsible to justice," Dr. Aulakh said. "But the most appropriate and important restitution that can be made to the Sikh Nation is to withdraw all Indian forces from Khalistan and allow it to enjoy its independence," he said. "Only then can the Sikh Nation live in peace, dignity, and freedom, secure in the knowledge that these kinds of incidents will not happen again," he said. "If India and Prime Minister Singh truly believe in freedom and democracy, they have a moral obligation to withdraw from Khalistan and all the nations they occupy, such as Kashmir, Nagaland, and others," he said.

Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, has said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Bodos, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According to the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial.

"The flame of freedom still burns bright in the hearts of Sikhs despite the deployment of over half a million Indian troops to crush it," Dr. Aulakh said. "Last year, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh signed a bill cancelling the agreements that allowed the diversion of Punjabi water to non-riparian states. The bill asserted the sovereignty of Punjab. Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, another former Member of Parliament, held a seminar on Khalistan in Punjab. It was well attended and featured outstanding presentations, including one by Professor Gurtej Singh, IAS, Professor of Sikhism," he said. "There have been several marches through Punjab demanding the establishment of an independent Khalistan. India is on the verge of disintegration," he said.

Cases were registered against dozens of Sikhs for raising the Sikh flag at the Golden Temple on the anniversary of the Golden Temple attack in the presence of over 30,000 Sikhs. Warrants have been issued for their arrest. The flag of Khalistan was also raised on Republic Day, January 26. 35 Sikhs were arrested at that time. Some of them have been denied bail. Dr. Aulakh demanded that India release all the people arrested for hoisting the flag and drop all charges against all these individuals. "Is it a crime to demand freedom in a democracy?," he asked. "Is this the freedom of speech that is guaranteed under India's constitution?"

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. The collapse of countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It has never been a single nation. It is doomed to break up as they did. Steve Forbes, writing in Forbes magazine, said that India is a multinational, multiethnic, multireligious, multicultural, multilingual state that is doomed to disintegrate like the Austro-Hungarian Empire. "India is not a homogeneous state," Forbes wrote. "Neither was the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It attacked Serbia in the summer of 1914 in the hopes of destroying this irritating state after Serbia had committed a spectacular terrorist act against the Hapsburg monarchy. The empire ended up splintering, and the Hapsburgs lost their throne." India is doomed to fall apart just as Austria-Hungary and the others did.

"We must continue to pray for and work for our God-given birthright of freedom," Dr. Aulakh said. "While this apology is a small first step, only a free Khalistan will satisfy the Sikh Nation," he said. "We must continue to work until this goal is achieved."

IN MEMORY OF RYAN BRANDT YOUNG

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember former Navy SEAL Ryan Brandt Young, a 32-year-old native of Halfway, MD, for serving our country in Iraq.

Young was based in southern Iraq as a security contractor for Triple Canopy and worked with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. He was killed Wednesday, September 7, when a bomb went off in the lead vehicle of a motorcade escort from the airport to the U.S. Embassy in Basra.

In my recent visit to Iraq, Young was a member of the detail that protected my mission. His group watched over the delegation as we traveled into dangerous territory. I was fortunate enough to have met him and honored to have him protect our unit. He was courageous, thoughtful and a true American. Today, I would like to recognize and celebrate his life. He made up his mind when he was only 14 that he would someday be a Navy SEAL, and he certainly achieved that goal. Eight of Young's 13 years in the Navy were spent as a SEAL.

His mother talked to him just 10 days before the bombing, and she described him as very happy, very up, and I think we could learn a great deal from him. It was my honor to have